STATUS OF THE GYPSY MOTH INFESTATION ON THE ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST

JANUARY 11, 1989

History

Gypsy moths first reached epidemic populations in the southern end of the Allegheny National Forest in 1984 and have since spread north and west throughout susceptible host vegetation types (primarily oak) on the rest of the Forest. Spraying to protect high value timber, recreation, and wildlife areas began in 1985 using both chemical pesticides (dimilin on 9,000 acres) and biologic pesticides (bacillus thuringiensis on 1500 acres). Since 1985 the Allegheny National Forest has applied only the biologic pesticide bacillus thuringiensis (b.t.). The following chart displays the history of moderate/severe defoliation and the history of gypsy moth spray treatment on the Forest.

History of Moderate/Severe Defoliation and Spray Treatment

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Moderate/severe defoliation (acres)	1,300	6,700	78,100	115,600	4,200
Spray Treatment (acres)	0	10,500	0	29,500	6,100

Current Status

Gypsy moths are spread across the entire portion of the Forest which has susceptible vegetation. The population suffered a general collapse throughout much of the area ~~following~~ the heavy defoliation which occurred during the spring of 1987. Before this year, however, the southeastern part of the Forest has not experienced the massive population buildup and the resulting severe defoliation suffered elsewhere thoroughout susceptible timber types. About 40,000 acres of the Forest have egg mass counts which are high enough to produce at least moderate or severe defoliation in the spring of 1989. We are preparing an Environmental Analysis to determine how to deal with this projected defoliation.

Gypsy moth populations typically follow a cycle of 3 to 5 years of buildup followed by a collapse and then 2 to 5 years of lower populations. Populations will then begin to build again, and the cycle begins once more. The collapse occurred across most of the Forest in 1987, and the next buildup could begin within two years, depending on how the gypsy moth responds to local environmental conditions.